

IN THE MATTER OF

CLAIRE K. WINIK, LCSW-C

RESPONDENT

License Number: 17505

*** BEFORE THE MARYLAND**

*** STATE BOARD OF**

*** SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS**

*** Case Number: 2021-3013**

* * * * *

ORDER FOR SUMMARY SUSPENSION

The Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDS** the license of **CLAIRE K. WINIK, LCSW-C** (the “Respondent”), License Number 17505, to practice social work in the State of Maryland. The Board takes such action pursuant to its authority under Md. Code Ann., State Gov’t § 10-226(c)(2) (2021 Repl. Vol.) and Md. Code Regs. (“COMAR”) 10.42.04.07(D), concluding that the public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires emergency action.

INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

The Board makes the following findings:¹

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was licensed to practice clinical social work in the State of Maryland. The Respondent initially was licensed as a licensed certified social worker-clinical (“LCSW-C”) in Maryland on or about April 29, 2014 under license number 17505. The Respondent’s license expires on October 31, 2024.

¹ The statements regarding the Respondent’s conduct are intended to provide the Respondent with reasonable notice of the basis of the summary suspension. They are not intended as, and do not necessarily represent a complete description of the evidence, either documentary or testimonial, that may be offered against the Respondent in connection with this matter.

2. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was self-employed as a therapist in Frederick County, Maryland.²

a. Complaint

3. On or about July 21, 2021, the Board received a written Complaint Form (the “Complaint”) alleging that the Respondent was married to and had a child with a former client with whom the Respondent had a previous therapeutic relationship.

4. Based on the Complaint, the Board began an investigation.

b. Investigation

5. In furtherance of its investigation, the Board in part obtained counseling records and emails from the Respondent, and conducted under oath interviews with the Respondent, the former client, the Complainant, and a colleague of the Respondent.

6. The investigation revealed that from October 20, 2016 until December 19, 2016, the Respondent treated the former client on eight (8) separate counseling sessions. Insurance records of the former client document that the Respondent was reimbursed for these counseling sessions.

7. The former client stated that she sought counseling with the Respondent after experiencing physical symptoms that she attributed to anxiety. The former client stated the Respondent “helped me therapeutically for just under two months....” The former client terminated the counseling relationship on or about December 19, 2016.

8. The Respondent confirmed the former client “contacted me about therapy

² For purposes of ensuring confidentiality, counseling centers and proper names have been omitted and replaced with generic placeholders. Upon written request, the Administrative Prosecutor will provide the information to the Respondent.

to potentially rule out an anxiety diagnosis relating to a medical condition that was unexplained and was not being cured or fixed.” The Respondent stated “I saw her a total of eight times. They were very health-based sessions. We went through her entire health history. Each session she received a recommendation from me, which is a normal, consistent part of my practice to reach out to varying providers that are healthcare related that could help potentially solve whatever the issue was.” The Respondent characterized these counseling sessions as “not a deep therapeutic relationship. The inter-workings of her family were not heavily discussed.”

9. Approximately two weeks after the former client terminated the counseling relationship, the former client reached out to the Respondent about meeting socially. The former client stated a “friendship” developed with the Respondent starting February, 2017 through June, 2017. The former client stated “around July [2017] something shifted and we were, we started to shift into more of a romantic relationship.” The former client recalled the Respondent stating “I cannot really engage in social activity with you. If we cross paths, it would be up to you to say hi to me and I started to learn those things....”

10. During this time period, the Respondent stated she “was unsure about having a social relationship...due to the fact that I had seen [the former client], even though it was eight times, even though it was healthcare based, it was not a deep therapeutic relationship. I explained do no harm. I explained that I was unsure that it would, that if it, I was unsure if it was acceptable or not and I had to do some research on it. I knew that it was gray. I then consulted a colleague and discussed it. Ultimately I decided to form a friendship with [the former client] that later evolved months later into a

romantic relationship. [The former client] is now my [spouse].

11. The Respondent and the former client married on April 27, 2019.

12. The Respondent and the former client had a child together on March 25, 2020.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing investigative findings, and pursuant to its authority under Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2) (2021 Repl. Vol.) and COMAR 10.42.04.07, the Board concludes as a matter of law that there is a substantial likelihood that the Respondent poses a risk of harm to the public health, safety, or welfare. In addition, pursuant to COMAR 10.42.04.07(D), the Board concludes that the public health, safety, and welfare imperatively requires the immediate suspension of the Respondent's license to practice social work in Maryland.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Investigative Findings and Conclusions of Law, it is by the Board hereby:

ORDERED that pursuant to the authority vested in the Board by Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2) and COMAR 10.42.04.07, the Respondent's license to practice social work in the State of Maryland is hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDED**; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent has the opportunity to appear before the Board at a post-deprivation show cause hearing to show cause why the suspension should not be continued. The show cause hearing has been scheduled for

Thursday December 1, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the Board's offices at 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215. If the Respondent does not attend either in person or through counsel, the Board will continue the suspension of her license; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent may request an evidentiary hearing on the merits of this matter. The request must be in writing and be made **WITHIN TEN (10) DAYS** of service of this Order. If no such written request is made, the suspension will continue indefinitely. The written request should be made to:

Daphne McClellan, Ph.D., MSW
Executive Director
Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

with copies mailed to:

Gregory L. Lockwood, Assistant Attorney General
Health Occupations Prosecution and Litigation Division
Office of the Attorney General
300 West Preston Street, Suite 201
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
gregory.lockwood@maryland.gov

and

Kristen Lim, Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
300 West Preston Street, Suite 302
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall immediately surrender to the Board her original LCSW-C license number 17505, and any other official indicia of licensure; and it is further

ORDERED that this is an Order of the Board, and as such, is a **PUBLIC DOCUMENT** pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. § 4-101 *et seq.* (2021 Repl. Vol.).



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sondra G. Petty, LCSW-C, C/CSW". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

11/17/2022

Date

Sondra G. Petty, LCSW-C
Board Chair
MD State Board of Social Work Examiners